

Appln. No. 09/810,903
Amendment
Reply to Communication dated Nov. 18, 2003

Docket No. 6979-1

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

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1 1. (Previously presented) A method for efficient bulk package delivery for
2 recipients comprising:
3 associating an article identifier of a package with an identifier of a pickup location;
4 grouping a plurality of packages for a plurality of recipients for delivery to a
5 destination centralized pickup location based on said association of said article identifier
6 and said pickup location identifier;
7 delivering said packages in bulk in a single delivery stop to said destination
8 centralized pickup location;
9 randomly selecting a storage locker bin from a system of storage locker bins; and
10 loading each delivered package into a respective randomly selected storage
11 locker bin.

1 2. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein said step of
2 delivering said packages in bulk for a plurality of recipients further comprises delivering at
3 least one item destined for a recipient.

1 3. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 2, wherein the step of
2 delivering said packages in bulk comprises sorting at an origination regional distribution
3 center (RDC) location items received from a plurality of retailers delivered to said
4 origination RDC location, said items destined for a plurality of said recipients, said items
5 organized by a common item identifier.

Appln. No. 09/810,903

Docket No. 6979-1

Amendment

Reply to Communication dated Nov. 18, 2003

C1

4. (Original) The method according to claim 3, wherein the step of sorting said received items at said origination RDC location further comprises:

identifying said received items to at least one of a destination centralized pickup location and a destination local distribution hub;

identifying said received items to a destination RDC; and

sorting and grouping said identified received items by said identified destination RDC, said identified received items organized by a common item identifier.

5. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 4, wherein the step of delivering said packages in bulk comprises:

transporting said sorted and grouped items to said identified destination RDC;

sorting at said destination RDC said transported items by said one of a destination centralized pickup location and a destination local distribution hub;

creating, at said destination RDC, said bulk delivered package by organizing said sorted items for a specific request, said sorted items being sorted by one of said destination centralized pickup location and said destination local distribution hub; and

transporting in bulk said created bulk delivered package having said items organized for a specific recipient, to one of said destination centralized pickup location and said destination local distribution hub.

6. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 5, wherein the step of creating said bulk delivered package at said destination RDC location further comprises

locating items destined for a specific recipient from items organized by said common item identifier.

Appln. No. 09/810,903
Amendment
Reply to Communication dated Nov. 18, 2003

Docket No. 6979-1

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1 7. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 6, further comprising
2 consolidating more than one of said located items destined for said specific recipient, said
3 more than one located items originating from more than one of said plurality of retailers.

1 8. (Original) The method according to claim 7, further comprising receiving said
2 located items associated with a single order from at least one fulfillment location, said
3 fulfillment location being at least one of a retailer, a manufacturer, a merchant and a
4 supplier.

1 9. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of
2 randomly loading said bulk delivered package into a system of storage locker bins further
3 comprises:
4 capturing electronically, an identifier for said bulk delivered package; and
5 associating said electronically captured identifier of said bulk delivered package
6 with an electronically captured identifier of one of said storage locker bins within said
7 system of storage locker bins.

1 10. (Original) The method according to claim 9, further comprising, retrieving said
2 bulk delivered package created for said specific recipient from a storage locker bin, said
3 retrieving step including authenticating an identity of said recipient prior to at least one of
4 revealing an identity of said storage locker bin and providing access to said storage locker
5 bin.

1 11. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 2, further comprising:
2 creating a returns package comprising at least one item from at least one of a bulk
3 delivered package retrieved by a recipient and a package delivered to a customer

Appln. No. 09/810,903
Amendment
Reply to Communication dated Nov. 18, 2003

Docket No. 6979-1

4 specified address, said returns package destined for a retailer associated with said at
5 least one item; and
6 delivering in bulk sorted and grouped returns packages to a returns facility of said
7 associated retailer.

1 12. (Original) The method according to claim 11, further comprising submitting
2 said returns package for pickup at a destination centralized pickup location.

1 13. (Currently amended) ~~The A method according to claim 2, for efficient bulk~~
2 package delivery for recipients further comprising:
3 delivering said packages in bulk for a plurality of recipients in a single delivery stop
4 to a destination centralized pickup location, and delivering at least one item destined for a
5 recipient;

6 loading said bulk delivered packages randomly into an automated system of
7 storage locker bins;

8 creating a returns package comprising at least one item from at least one of a bulk
9 delivered package retrieved by a recipient and a package delivered to a customer
10 specified address, said returns package destined for a retailer associated with said at
11 least one item;

12 identifying a returns facility identifier and a returns local market identifier for said
13 returns package based upon an identifier of said retailer;

14 identifying a regional distribution center (RDC) identifier associated with said
15 returns local market identifier;

16 submitting said returns package for pickup at a destination centralized pickup
17 location;

Appln. No. 09/810,903

Docket No. 6979-1

Amendment

Reply to Communication dated Nov. 18, 2003

18 transporting said submitted returns package from said destination centralized
19 pickup location of said returns package submission to a destination RDC associated with
20 said destination centralized pickup location of said returns package submission;
21 sorting and grouping at said associated destination RDC a plurality of transported
22 returns packages by said identified RDC identifier associated with said returns local
23 market identifier for bulk delivery to an origination RDC associated with said identified
24 RDC identifier;
25 transporting said sorted and grouped returns packages from said associated
26 destination RDC to said associated origination RDC;
27 sorting at said associated origination RDC said transported returns packages by
28 said identified returns local market identifier of each said returns package;
29 sorting and grouping at said associated origination RDC said sorted returns
30 package by said identified returns facility identifier of said sorted returns package for bulk
31 delivery to a returns facility associated with said associated returns facility identifier; and
32 delivering in bulk said sorted and grouped returns packages to said associated
33 returns facility.

1 14. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 1, A method for efficient
2 bulk package delivery for recipients comprising the steps of:
3 delivering said packages in bulk for a plurality of recipients in a single delivery step
4 to a destination centralized pickup location; and
5 loading said bulk delivered packages randomly into an automated system of
6 storage locker bins
7 wherein the step of randomly loading said bulk delivered package into an
8 automated system of storage locker bins comprises automatically triggering the dispatch
9 of an electronic notification to said recipient of said bulk delivered package, said

Appln. No. 09/810,903
Amendment
Reply to Communication dated Nov. 18, 2003

Docket No. 6979-1

10 electronic notification having at least an identifier of said destination centralized pickup
11 location.

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15. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 14, wherein said step of
1 automatically triggering the dispatch of said electronic notification further comprises
2 recording information necessary for billing at least one of a customer who ordered an item
3 of said bulk delivered package, said recipient and a retailer, said information including at
4 least one of an order identifier, an ordering customer identifier, a recipient identifier, a
5 customer identifier, a package identifier, a delivery date, a delivery time, a delivery
6 notification date, a delivery notification time, a retrieval date and a retrieval time.

16. (Original) The method according to claim 14, wherein said electronic
1 notification to said recipient comprises, at least one of a facsimile, an email, a telephone
2 call, and a page.

17. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1, further comprising
1 retrieval of said bulk delivered package by said recipient through self-service.

18. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of
1 loading said bulk delivered packages randomly into said system of storage locker bins
2 further comprises loading a bulk delivered package into any unoccupied storage locker
3 bin within said system of storage locker bins, said unoccupied storage locker bin having
4 dimensions large enough to accept said bulk delivered package, said system of storage
5 locker bins being configurable.

Appln. No. 09/810,903
Amendment
Reply to Communication dated Nov. 18, 2003

Docket No. 6979-1

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1 19. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1, further comprising
2 controlling a temperature within said bins of said system of storage locker bins by locating
3 said bins in a temperature controlled environment.

1 20. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein said step of
2 delivering said packages in bulk to said destination centralized pickup location further
3 comprises accommodating delivery of said packages in bulk to said destination
4 centralized pickup location from a plurality of different shippers.

1 21. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein said step of
2 loading said bulk delivered packages randomly into said system of storage locker bins
3 further comprises accommodating loading of said bulk delivered package into said
4 system of storage locker bins from a plurality of different shippers.

1 22. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein said step of
2 delivering said packages in bulk to said destination centralized pickup location further
3 comprises creating a bulk delivered package at a retailer fulfillment site, said bulk
4 delivered package containing at least one ordered item organized for a specific recipient.

1 23. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 22, further comprising:
2 determining one of a specified destination centralized pickup location and a
3 destination local distribution hub for bulk delivery of a bulk delivered package;
4 determining a destination RDC for said bulk delivered package;
5 transporting said bulk delivered package from said retailer fulfillment site to an
6 origination RDC;
7 sorting and grouping at said origination RDC said transported bulk delivered
8 package by said determined destination RDC;

{WP160225;1}

Appln. No. 09/810,903
Amendment
Reply to Communication dated Nov. 18, 2003

Docket No. 6979-1

9 transporting said bulk delivered package from said origination RDC to said
10 determined destination RDC;
11 sorting and grouping for bulk delivery at said determined destination RDC a
12 plurality of transported bulk delivered packages by said determined one of said specified
13 pickup location and said local distribution hub; and
14 delivering said bulk delivered packages in bulk from said determined destination
15 RDC to said determined one of said specified pickup location and said local distribution
16 hub.

1 24. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein said step of
2 delivering said bulk delivered packages to said destination centralized pickup location
3 further comprises:
4 creating a bulk delivered package at a retailer fulfillment site, said bulk delivered
5 package containing at least one ordered item organized for a specific recipient;
6 determining one of a specified destination centralized pickup location and a
7 destination local distribution hub for bulk delivery of said created bulk delivered package;
8 sorting and grouping for bulk delivery at said retailer fulfillment site said bulk
9 delivered package based on said determined one of a specified destination centralized
10 pickup location and a destination local distribution hub; and
11 delivering in bulk a plurality of said bulk delivered packages from said retailer
12 fulfillment site to said determined one of a specified destination centralized pickup
13 location and a destination local distribution hub.

1 25. (Original) The method according to claim 1, further comprising:
2 creating a bulk delivered customer distribution center (CDC) outbound package
3 consisting of at least one item destined for a recipient at one of a specified destination
4 centralized pickup location and a specified address;

{WP160225;1}

Appln. No. 09/810,903
Amendment
Reply to Communication dated Nov. 18, 2003

Docket No. 6979-1

5 submitting said bulk delivered CDC outbound package for pickup at a destination
6 centralized pickup location; and
7 delivering a plurality of said CDC outbound packages in bulk to one of said
8 specified destination centralized pickup location and a local distribution hub.

26 - 28 (Cancelled)

1 29. (Previously presented) A system for efficient bulk package delivery for
2 recipients, the system comprising:

3 associating means for associating an article identifier of a package with an
4 identifier of a pickup location;

5 grouping means for grouping a plurality of packages intended for a plurality of
6 recipients for delivery to a destination centralized pickup location based on said
7 association of said article identifier and said pickup location identifier;

8 delivery means for delivering said packages in bulk in a single delivery stop to said
9 destination centralized pickup location;

10 means for randomly selecting a storage locker bin from a system of storage locker
11 bins; and

12 means for loading each delivered package into a respective randomly selected
13 storage locker bin.

1 30. (Previously presented) The system according to claim 29, wherein said
2 delivery means for delivering of said packages in bulk for recipients further comprises
3 delivery means for delivery of at least one item destined for a recipient.

1 31. (Previously presented) The system according to claim 30, wherein said
2 delivery means for delivering of said packages in bulk comprises means for sorting at an

{WP160225;1}

Appln. No. 09/810,903
Amendment
Reply to Communication dated Nov. 18, 2003

Docket No. 6979-1

C1
3 origination regional distribution center (RDC) location, items received from a plurality of
4 retailers delivered to said origination RDC location, said items destined for a plurality of
5 said recipients, and said items organized by a common item identifier.

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1 32. (Original) The system according to claim 31, wherein said means for sorting
2 said received items at said origination RDC location further comprises:
3 identification means for identifying said received items to at least one of a
4 destination centralized pickup location and a destination local distribution hub;
5 identification means for identifying said received items to a destination RDC; and
6 means for sorting and grouping said identified received items by said identified
7 destination RDC, said identified received items organized by a common item identifier.

1 33. (Previously presented) The system according to claim 32, wherein said
2 means for delivering said packages in bulk comprises:
3 transportation means for transporting said sorted and grouped items to said
4 identified destination RDC;
5 means for sorting at said destination RDC said transported items by said one of a
6 destination centralized pickup location and a destination local distribution hub;
7 means for creating said bulk delivered package at said destination RDC by
8 organizing said sorted items for a specific recipient, said sorted items being sorted by one
9 of said destination centralized pickup location and said destination local distribution hub;
10 and
11 transportation means for transporting in bulk said created bulk delivered package
12 having said items organized for a specific recipient, to one of said destination centralized
13 pickup location and said destination local distribution hub.

Appln. No. 09/810,903
Amendment
Reply to Communication dated Nov. 18, 2003

Docket No. 6979-1

C1
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1 34. (Previously presented) The system according to claim 33, wherein said means
2 for creating said bulk delivered package at said destination RDC location further
3 comprises means for locating items destined to a specific recipient from items organized
4 by said common item identifier.

1 35. (Previously presented) The system according to claim 34, further comprising
2 consolidation means for consolidating more than one of said located items originating
3 from said plurality of retailers, destined for said specific recipient.

1 36. (Original) The system according to claim 35, further comprising means for
2 receiving said located items associated with a single order from at least one fulfillment
3 location, said fulfillment location being at least one of a retailer, a manufacturer, a
4 merchant and a supplier.

1 37. (Previously presented) The system according to claim 29, wherein said means
2 for randomly loading said bulk delivered package into said automated system of storage
3 locker bins comprises:
4 electronics for electronically capturing an identifier for said bulk delivered package;
5 and
6 means for associating said electronically captured identifier of said bulk delivered
7 package with an electronically captured identifier of one of said storage locker bins within
8 said automated system of storage locker bins.

1 38. (Original) The system according to claim 37, further comprising, retrieval
2 means for retrieving said bulk delivered package created for said specific recipient from a
3 storage locker bin, said retrieval means having a computing means for authenticating an

Appln. No. 09/810,903
Amendment
Reply to Communication dated Nov. 18, 2003

Docket No. 6979-1

4 identity of said recipient prior to at least one of revealing an identity of said storage locker
5 bin and providing access to said storage locker bin.

1 39. (Previously presented) The system according to claim 30, further comprising:
2 means for creating a returns package consisting of at least one item from at least
3 one of a bulk delivered package retrieved by a recipient and a package delivered to a
4 customer specified address, said returns package destined for a retailer associated with
5 said at least one item; and
6 delivery means for delivering in bulk, a plurality of sorted and grouped returns
7 packages to a returns facility of said associated retailer.

1 40. (Original) The system according to claim 39, further comprising means for
2 submitting said returns package for pickup at a destination centralized pickup location.

1 41. (Previously presented) A system for efficient bulk package delivery for
2 recipients, the system comprising:
3 delivery means for delivering said packages in bulk for a plurality of recipients in a
4 single delivery stop to a destination centralized pickup location and for delivery of at least
5 one item destined for a recipient;
6 a means for randomly loading said bulk delivered packages into an automated
7 system of storage locker bins;
8 means for creating a returns package comprising at least one item from at least
9 one of a bulk delivered package retrieved by a recipient and a package delivered to a
10 customer specified address, said returns package destined for a retailer associated with
11 said at least one item;
12 identification means for identifying a returns facility identifier and a returns local
13 market identifier for said returns package based upon an identifier of said retailer;

(WP160225;1)

13

Appln. No. 09/810,903

Docket No. 6979-1

Amendment

Reply to Communication dated Nov. 18, 2003

14 identification means for identifying a regional distribution center (RDC) identifier
15 associated with said returns local market identifier;
16 means for submitting said returns package for pickup at a destination centralized
17 pickup location;
18 transportation means for transporting said submitted returns package from said
19 destination centralized pickup location of said returns package submission to a
20 destination RDC associated with said destination centralized pickup location of said
21 returns package submission;
22 means for sorting and grouping at said associated destination RDC said
23 transported returns package by said identified RDC identifier associated with said returns
24 local market identifier for bulk delivery to an origination RDC associated with said
25 identified RDC identifier;
26 transportation means for transporting said sorted and grouped returns package
27 from said associated destination RDC to said associated origination RDC;
28 means for sorting at said associated origination RDC said transported returns
29 package by said identified returns local market identifier of said returns package;
30 means for sorting and grouping at said associated origination RDC said sorted
31 returns package by said identified returns facility identifier of said sorted returns package
32 for bulk delivery to a returns facility associated with said associated returns facility
33 identifier; and
34 delivery means for delivering in bulk said sorted and grouped returns package to
35 said associated returns facility.

1 42. (Previously presented) The system according to claim 29, wherein said means
2 for randomly loading said bulk delivered package into said system of storage locker bins
3 comprises electronic circuitry and software for automatically triggering the dispatch of an

Appln. No. 09/810,903

Docket No. 6979-1

Amendment

Reply to Communication dated Nov. 18, 2003

4 electronic notification to said recipient of said bulk delivered package, said electronic
5 notification having at least an identifier of said destination centralized pickup location.

1 43. (Previously presented) The system according to claim 42, wherein said
2 electronic circuitry and software for automatically triggering the dispatch of said electronic
3 notification further comprises circuitry and associated software for recording information
4 necessary for billing at least one of a customer who ordered an item of said bulk delivered
5 package, said recipient and a retailer, said information including at least one of an order
6 identifier, an ordering customer identifier, a recipient identifier, a customer identifier, a
7 package identifier, a delivery date, a delivery time, a delivery notification date, a delivery
8 notification time, a retrieval date and a retrieval time.

1 44. (Previously presented) The system according to claim 42, wherein said
2 electronic notification to said recipient comprises at least one of a facsimile, an email, a
3 telephone call, and a page.

1 45. (Previously presented) The system according to claim 29, further comprising
2 retrieval means for retrieval of said bulk delivered package by said recipient through
3 self-service.

1 46. (Previously presented) The system according to claim 29, wherein said means
2 for loading said bulk delivered package randomly into said system of storage locker bins
3 further comprises means for loading said bulk delivered package into any unoccupied
4 storage locker bin within said system of storage locker bins, said unoccupied storage
5 locker bin having dimensions large enough to accept said bulk delivered package, said
6 system of storage locker bins being configurable.

Appln. No. 09/810,903

Docket No. 6979-1

Amendment

Reply to Communication dated Nov. 18, 2003

1 47. (Previously presented) The system according to claim 29, wherein said
2 delivery means for delivering said package in bulk to said destination centralized pickup
3 location further comprises means for accommodating delivery of said package in bulk to
4 said destination centralized pickup location from a plurality of different shippers.

1 48. (Previously presented) The system according to claim 29, wherein said means
2 for loading said bulk delivered package randomly into said automated system of storage
3 locker bins further comprises means for accommodating loading of said bulk delivered
4 package into said automated system of storage locker bins from a plurality of different
5 shippers.

1 49. (Original) The system according to claim 29, wherein said delivery means for
2 delivering said package in bulk to said destination centralized pickup location further
3 comprises, means for creating said bulk delivered package at a retailer fulfillment site,
4 said bulk delivered package containing at least one ordered item organized for a specific
5 recipient.

1 50. (Previously presented) The system according to claim 49, wherein said
2 delivery means for delivering said package in bulk to said destination centralized pickup
3 location further comprises:

4 means for determining one of a specified destination centralized pickup location
5 and a destination local distribution hub for bulk delivery of said bulk delivered package;

6 means for determining a destination regional distribution center (RDC) for said
7 bulk delivered package;

8 transportation means for transporting said bulk delivered package from said
9 retailer fulfillment site to an origination RDC;

Appln. No. 09/810,903

Docket No. 6979-1

Amendment

Reply to Communication dated Nov. 18, 2003

10 means for sorting and grouping at said origination RDC said transported bulk
11 delivered package by said determined destination RDC;
12 transportation means for transporting said bulk delivered package from said
13 origination RDC to said determined destination RDC;
14 means for sorting and grouping for bulk delivery at said determined destination
15 RDC a plurality of said transported bulk delivered packages by said determined one of
16 said specified pickup location and said local distribution hub; and
17 delivery means for delivering said bulk delivered packages in bulk from said
18 determined destination RDC to said determined one of said specified pickup location and
19 said local distribution hub.

1 51. (Previously presented) The system according to claim 29, wherein said means
2 for delivering said bulk delivered package to said destination centralized pickup location
3 further comprises:

4 means for creating said bulk delivered package at a retailer fulfillment site, said
5 bulk delivered package containing at least one ordered item organized for a specific
6 recipient;

7 means for determining one of a specified destination centralized pickup location
8 and a destination local distribution hub for bulk delivery of said created bulk delivered
9 package;

10 sorting means for sorting and grouping for bulk delivery at said retailer fulfillment
11 site a plurality of said bulk delivered packages based on said determined one of a
12 specified destination centralized pickup location and a destination local distribution hub;
13 and

14 delivery means for delivering in bulk said bulk delivered packages from said
15 retailer fulfillment site to said determined one of a specified destination centralized pickup
16 location and a destination local distribution hub.

{WP160225;1}

Appln. No. 09/810,903
Amendment
Reply to Communication dated Nov. 18, 2003

Docket No. 6979-1

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- 1 52. (Previously presented) The system according to claim 29, further comprising:
 - 2 means for creating bulk delivered customer distribution center (CDC) outbound
 - 3 package consisting of at least one item destined for a recipient at one of a specified
 - 4 destination centralized pickup location and a specified address;
 - 5 means for submitting said bulk delivered CDC outbound package for pickup at a
 - 6 destination centralized pickup location; and
 - 7 delivery means for delivering said CDC outbound package in bulk to one of said
 - 8 specified destination centralized pickup location and a destination local distribution hub.

53 – 55. (Cancelled).